

**AGENDA  
for the  
REGULAR MEETING  
of the  
CITY of KINGSPORT  
GATEWAY REVIEW COMMISSION**

**IMPROVEMENT BUILDING  
JIMMY WALKER CONFERENCE ROOM**

**January 19, 2018**

**10:00 A.M.**

- I. Introductions and recognition of visitors.**
- II. Approval of the Minutes from the November 17, 2017 regular meeting.**
- III. Old Business:**
- IV. New Business:**
  - a. Consider a Zoning Text Amendment to Section 114-421 of the Zoning Code as it pertains to Fencing and Signage Height.
  - b. Discussion of Gateway Overlay Boundaries
- V. Other Business:**
  - a. Next meeting – February 16, 2018
- VI. Adjourn**

## **MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2017 MEETING OF THE KINGSPORT GATEWAY REVIEW COMMISSION**

November 17, 2017

10:00a.m.

### **Members Present**

Jim Wright, Co-Chairman  
Vivian Crymble, Co- Chairman  
Debra Bridwell  
John Perdue  
Lynn Tully

### **Members Absent**

Lynn Tully  
Alderman Betsy Cooper

### **Staff Present**

Jessica Harmon

### **Visitors**

Co-Chairman Crymble called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone present at the meeting.

The minutes of the October 27, 2017 Gateway Review Commission meeting were presented. John Perdue motioned to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Jim Wright. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

The first item under old business was the discussion pertaining to the fence regulations with the Gateway Overlay District. Staff indicated to the Commissioners that the proposed fencing regulations had been presented to the City Attorney who was ok with what was being proposed. A discussion ensued around what type of security purposes were allowable. It was determined to add the language for storage of materials and equipment to the regulations to create clarity. Staff explained that as a matter of process, this change would occur with the change to the signage that they would be discussing later.

The second item under old business was the discussion around the boundaries of the Gateway District. Staff explained that there had been discussion with the City Attorney and the boundaries for the Gateway District were laid out in the Charter. Commissioner Tully explained that there was the possibility to create new Overlay Districts within the Zoning Text now that state law has changed. It was asked that we discuss this at our next meeting with maps and determine where would be fitting to create a new overlay area. It was expressed that it would be good to talk to Mike McIntire once some areas are determined so that he can get a grasp on the idea before Planning Commission

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The only item under new business was the discussion of sign height regulations. Staff explained the current status of sign height regulations within the Gateway Overlay District and that there is no real definitive height limit. Staff explained that what was presented to them was very similar to the Business Conference Center District which is what MeadowView is currently zoned. The regulation presented was

for those commercially zoned properties adjacent to the interstate to be allowed a 15 foot tall sign and those parcels not adjacent to the interstate to be allowed an 8 foot tall sign. During discussion it was determined that the TA/C district should be pulled out and its own section created since it has a special set of sign regulations for interstate properties. It was determined to keep the MX, M-1R, M-1 and M-2 zoning districts unchanged as it pertains to sign height.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Under other business, staff explained that the next meeting was scheduled for December 22, 2018. It was decided that if there was no applications for a COA we would cancel this meeting. Staff explained that a notice of public hearing would be ran for the January meeting where we would consider the text amendments discussed this meeting.

There being no further business, the Commission adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Vivian Crymble Co-Chairman, or Jim Wright Co-Chairman

<b>Property Information</b>			
Address			
Tax Map, Group, Parcel			
Civil District			
Overlay District		Gateway	
Land Use Designation			
Acres			
Existing Use		Existing Zoning	
Proposed Use		Proposed Zoning	
<b>Owner /Applicant Information</b>			
<b>Name:</b> <b>Address:</b> <b>City:</b> <b>State: Zip Code:</b> <b>Email:</b> <b>Phone Number:</b>		<b>Intent:</b> To amend Division 10 – Gateway District Overlay to add language pertaining to the height of monument signs allowed and types of material allowed for fencing.	
<b>Planning Department Recommendation</b>			
<b>(Approve, Deny, or Defer)</b>  The Gateway Review Commission is asked to <b>RECOMMEND</b> to the Kingsport Regional Planning Commission a Zoning Text Amendment related to signage height and fencing types.			
Planner:	Harmon	Date: January 8, 2018	
<b>Gateway Review Commission Action</b>		<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>January 19, 2018</b>
Approval:			
Denial:		Reason for Denial:	
Deferred:		Reason for Deferral:	

**INTENT**

To amend Division 10 – Gateway District Overlay to add language pertaining to the height of monument signs allowed and types of material allowed for fencing.

**Introduction:**

This zoning text amendment is a result of various requests to the Gateway Overlay Commission for signs of various heights and an alternate to the allowable fencing materials. The Commission has discussed the need to amend the text to better serve the public and their needs while still meeting the goals of the Gateway District regulations.

**Summary:**

Currently, the Gateway District regulations state that all signs must be monument in style and the height must be proportionate to the surrounding structures. The Gateway Commission discussed the need to create a height regulation for commercial district signs so there is some consistency throughout the District. Special consideration was given to those properties who are adjacent to the interstate.

The proposed text amendment is very similar in nature to the Business Conference (BC) district. The amendment allows for parcels who are zoned commercial and are adjacent to the interstate to have one 15 foot tall freestanding monument sign and parcels who are zoned commercial and not adjacent to the interstate to have one 8 foot tall freestanding monument sign. The proposed amendment also pulls out the TA/C district as a separate set of regulations from the general commercial districts and allows for the interstate identity sign, but with a reduction in square footage of 50 percent.

The Gateway District regulations also prohibit the use of chain link fencing within the commercial districts. Several requests have been presented to the Commission pertaining to the use of chain link. The proposed text amendment allows for chain link to be utilized for security purposes as long as it is black vinyl coated and screened with landscaping on all portions visible from the right-of-way.

Changes are shown as follows:

**Bold and strikethrough – delete**

**Red – addition**

**Division 10. – Gateway District Overlay (GDO)**

**Sec. 114-421. - Development guidelines.**

- (a) *Generally.* All businesses, commercial, manufacturing, and industrial development and changes to existing developments located in the Gateway District Overlay shall be reviewed by the gateway review commission, or their designee, except for residential structures or agricultural uses and structures. Such new and existing businesses, commercial, manufacturing and industrial developments shall receive a gateway review commission's approval by issuance of a certificate of appropriateness before receiving an erosion control, grading, building permit or certificate of occupancy.
- (b) *Design strategies for development within P-1, ~~TA~~, B-1, B-3, B-4P and BC districts.* The following shall apply to P-1, ~~TA~~, B-1, B-3, B-4P and BC zoning districts within the Gateway District Overlay:
  - (1) *Grading plan.* Improvements on the site should be developed to minimize changes in existing topography and the loss of existing mature vegetation. All existing trees with trunks over 12 inches in diameter measured four feet above the lowest grade should be shown on the grading plans. Incentives are provided to retain healthy existing trees. Smooth topographic transition should be provided at the edges of property. Minimum changes in topography are recommended with no slopes exceeding 1:3 ratio (one-foot rise to a three-foot run). All grading plans require approval by the engineering department. All grading plans over one-acre require approval by the state department of environment and conservation before a grading permit can be issued. See the erosion control provisions of this Code for additional requirements.
  - (2) *Site plan.* A building setback of a minimum of 50 feet from the right-of-way shall be maintained for all buildings locating adjacent to any interstate, expressway or principal arterial street. Where the need exists for retaining an open image, protecting views, creating a high quality image, and maintaining natural edges along the roadway's borders a wider setback may be requested. Developments are encouraged to be located and configures in a visually harmonious manner with surrounding developments, existing terrain, and not to impede scenic views within the corridor. Additional district setback information is in this chapter. For details regarding the required information for development plan submittals, see the zoning development plan, parking and landscaping provisions of this chapter.
  - (3) *Drainage plan.* To minimize runoff and provide adequate green space, impervious surfaces such as roofs and pavement should not cover more than 75 percent of the site area.

Undeveloped right-of-way immediately adjoining the site may be used in calculation of the impervious area, provided it is not more than 15 percent of the calculation and is maintained by the occupant. Stormwater entry and exit points must be protected to avoid erosion. An open space system of ridges, steep slopes, drainage corridors, periphery yards, buffers and landscaped areas provide natural stormwater absorption and filtration zones avoiding the need for large scale piping and retention systems. When such designs are not possible, stormwater areas will be landscaped to blend with natural features of the site. Retention or detention ponds, if needed, are encouraged to be graded gradually enough not to require fencing. Appropriate stormwater and drainage calculations shall be provided by a licensed professional, as permitted by the state, and approved by the city engineer.

- (4) *Landscape plan.* Visual buffers shall be provided along interstates, expressways or major arterial streets by using a combination of opaque fencing, natural vegetation, berming, and/or informal plantings as recommended by the landscape specialist. The property owners shall maintain all plant material within the right-of-way, when used as a credit for pervious area, and on the property for the lifetime of the proposed use. For any new use, this maintenance responsibility must continue. Visual buffers used to soften the appearance of structures and parking lots from interior streets are recommended. Options for landscaping are made available for developers who create dedicated open public spaces, walkways, or other creative, resourceful, land uses in the landscape and buffer provisions of this division. For additional requirements of landscape plans, see the article VII of this chapter, landscaping.
- (5) *Architectural design.* A compatible relationship for proposed developments in the Gateway District Overlay is of critical public concern for any building or site improvements. The intent of the design review is not to stifle innovative architecture but to ensure respect while reducing incompatible and adverse impacts on the visual experience from the roadways. The commission may alter corporate colors or architectural designs within the district to create a compatible visual image. To accomplish this, the gateway review commission shall exercise the following guidelines for review of such proposed developments:
  - a. *Materials.* Selection and use of building materials should respect the climate and heritage of the area.
    - 1. Exterior building materials, which are encouraged include: brick, stone and stone veneers, plate glass, precast concrete panels, architectural block, glass block, and EIFS (commonly known as Dryvit).
    - 2. Materials considered unacceptable include: plywood or plywood-based products, pre-engineered metal, painted or natural concrete block, and composite building parcels, and vinyl siding.

Designers are encouraged to vary materials from building to building while limiting the number of different materials to three on any individual structure.

- b. *Colors.* In general, neutral or muted tones should be used. A maximum of three predominant colors should be used. Painted or factory-finished metal should be used only in dark colors with a matte finish.
  - c. *Accessory buildings.* Metal buildings shall be an accessory to the principal structure without public access, typically used for storage and must be concealed from view. Large areas of exposed concrete are discouraged.
  - d. *Architectural elements.* All development designs are to be consistent or compatible within a development in terms of architectural design, exterior building materials, colors and/or arrangement of buildings.
    - 1. Rooflines shall be strongly defined. Canopies and other architectural elements, such as brick or rockwork details, which define the roof, are encouraged. All mechanical/electrical equipment and rooftop- or ground-mounted equipment and protrusions are to be screened from view from entrances and pedestrian pathways as viewed from on-site ground level. Roof-mounted equipment must be screened on all sides. Sloped roofs may be used in combination with flat roofs to enliven the building profile and to provide screening.
    - 2. Large blank walls shall be avoided. Recessed or articulated wall surfaces, columns and beams are encouraged to visually segment exterior wall surfaces. Windows and other openings should reflect the character and style of the building.
    - 3. Service areas, including storage, special equipment, maintenance and loading area, shall be completely screened so as not to be visible from the interstate, expressway or arterial highway.
    - 4. Refuse collection areas shall be visually screened using materials and colors compatible with those of the primary structure and shall be roofed if the contents are visible from any public street, interstate, expressway or arterial street.
- (6) *Signs.* Although signs occupy little space, they have a major impact on the image of the Gateway District Overlay. For this reason, signage systems must be designed to create a consistent quality image throughout the district. Specific requirements can be found in article IV of this chapter, signs, additional requirements are set forth in this document that also apply within the Gateway District Overlay. The intent is to create a cohesive image and to consistently decrease the amount of clutter and visual disturbance within the district. Any appeals to the following standards must be presented to the gateway review commission:
- a. Permanent signs will be reduced by ~~up to~~ 50 percent of the square footage allowed in the underlying zoning district by the gateway review commission, and are limited to one freestanding sign and one wall mounted sign.



- b. One freestanding monument sign is permitted on the parcel adjacent to an interstate right-of-way and only one such freestanding monument sign may be permitted per lot. The maximum height of such sign shall be 15 feet above the average ground level. On parcels not adjacent to the interstate, one freestanding monument sign is permitted. The maximum height of such sign shall be 8 feet above the average ground level. ~~Monument style signs are required with the signs height and square footage being in scale with the building or site.~~ Signs ~~are required to~~ **should** be internally illuminated block letters mounted on a raceway. Backlit letters and indirectly illuminated signs are **also** acceptable. A three-color maximum is allowed for signs with up to two font styles. Ground-mounted building identification signs shall have fully enclosed solid bases of either brick or stone, mounted at the ground plane. No supporting structural members are to be exposed. Specific underlying zoning requirements for signs can be found in article IV of this chapter.
- c. The following signs are prohibited: A-frame signs; roof-mounted signs or portico-mounted signs; bench signs; off-premises signage; captive balloon signs; inflatable signs; portable signs and portable signs converted to permanent locations; lollipop signs; paper, cloth, plastic streamers and canvas; painted signs on primary walls; pendants; traffic sign replicas; high-rise signs; permanent come-on signs (sale today, stop, look, etc.). Strings with continuous flags shall not be permitted.
- d. Changeable copy signs are allowed for automobile service stations, theaters, and conference centers. Electronic message board signs may be considered with the review of the commission if they are allowed by the underlying zoning district.
- e. Landscaped areas are required around the base of signs. The minimum landscaped area shall not be less than the square footage of the sign. The landscaped area must be protected from vehicular traffic and approved by the city landscape specialist.
- f. Interim signs. While signs of a nonpermanent nature are generally not permitted, any sign that is not permanent in nature and fails to meet permanent sign requirements must meet the following respective specifications:
  - 1. For sale and for lease signs shall be limited to two per parcel. The size shall be limited to one square foot of sign for every four feet of lot road frontage up to a maximum of 64 square feet for one surface, or 32 square feet per side with two faces maximum. Real estate signs shall have a maximum height of six feet, measured from the ground level (average grade).
  - 2. Temporary signs for construction sites shall not exceed 64 square feet total and shall be removed upon completion of construction activity and before occupancy of the building.

- g. Special event signs must be removed following the event and are permitted only on the premises during the event, but in no case longer than 15 days. See section 114-528(2)d for size allowances.
- (7) *Landscaping and screening.* The landscape guidelines are designed to maintain overall visual continuity within the Gateway District Overlay. The intent is to reflect the traditional character of the area with informal groupings of plants amidst green lawns and woodlands. Landscape design should complement this image.
- a. A performance bond is required for a period of one-year, with extensions granted when necessary, for landscaping not installed at the time of issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Landscaping must be maintained for the lifetime of the intended use. Landscaped areas are required around the base of signs. The minimum landscaped area shall not be less than the square footage of the sign. The landscaped area must be protected from vehicular traffic and approved by the city landscape specialist.
  - b. Healthy existing trees should be retained whenever possible and may be counted as credit (two trees for every saved tree) for other required landscaping. Grading and construction shall avoid the disturbance of such trees. Larger trees or up to double the amount of required number of trees and vegetation may be required by the commission if it is shown the site was clear cut within three years prior to submittal of a development plan.
  - c. Landscape incentives may be utilized to encourage the preservation of existing healthy vegetation and innovative site design. Existing healthy vegetation and the area of land used to maintain the vegetation may be counted towards meeting performance criteria for buffers, streetscapes, open space, and interior parking areas.
    - 1. A five to 20 percent reduction in the number of parking spaces required on the site may be allowed to the extent that the reduction in the amount of pavement will preserve existing healthy trees in an undisturbed natural condition.
    - 2. A ten percent reduction in the amount of pervious area is required on the site if public art/space in a compatible manner is included in the development.
    - 3. A reduction in required landscaping may be considered if the development includes innovative site/building design concepts, substantial redevelopment of a site, or if natural constraints exist.
    - 4. The area used for preservation of existing healthy vegetation in the interior parking area may be used as credits for other landscaping.

5. Substitutions for both trees and shrubbery amounts and locations may be considered by the commission with a recommendation from the landscape specialist.
- d. Fencing and screening. Long fences (50 feet or more) should be broken up by landscaping ~~or undulation in the fence line~~. When necessary to secure outdoor equipment and storage, Chain link fencing may be permitted on a case by case basis as long as it is black vinyl coated and screened with landscaping on all portions visible from the right-of-way. and unfinished wood fences are not allowed.
  1. Fencing and screening shall not be placed within 25 feet of any street corner. Fencing and screening shall not block access to aboveground, pad-mounted transformers and should provide 15 feet of clear access to the transformer doors.
  2. Fencing and screening shall not impede or divert the flow of water in any drainageway.
  3. The maximum height of fences should generally be six feet, except for tennis courts, storage screening, and similar uses which may be up to 12 feet in height. No fences over two feet six inches shall be placed in any front yard.
  4. The Gateway District Overlay approved standard for right-of-way border fencing or frontal fencing is required along interstate, expressways or arterial highways.
- (8) *Lighting and utilities.* Lighting should be used as a landscape element and for security purposes and should be designed to reduce impacts on adjacent sites. Consistency in style and design of fixtures shall be maintained throughout a site.
  - a. Lighting levels should be as even as possible. For all private roadways, parking lots and entrances, the lighting system should provide a minimum ratio of 4:1 uniformity or better, or with the current Institute of Electrical Standards (IES) recommendations for office and mixed-use developments. General parking lot lighting shall not exceed an average of 2½ footcandles overall. All lighted canopies shall have recessed, indirect lights within the canopy.
  - b. Lights placement must avoid glare on-site or light spillage onto adjacent sites. Where necessary, cutoff boxes should be specified to reduce throw on adjacent sites.
  - c. Neon lighting is not encouraged; however, soft and/or muted colors may be allowed.
  - d. Light poles are to be neutral, preferably dark in color and not made of wood. All parking and security lights are to be cutoff luminaires. The height of light fixtures should be in proportion to the building mass, preferably no taller than the building height. Lighting for pedestrian areas should be 12 to 15 feet in height. Ground-

- oriented pedestrian scale lighting should be considered as an alternative to pole-mounted fixtures along pedestrian walkways at three to four feet in height.
- e. Outside speakers shall not be permitted for use as paging or public address systems. Outside speakers may only be used under certain conditions, with the commission's approval, for special/cultural or public events.
  - f. All utility lines, including but not limited to electric, telephone and TV cable shall be placed underground.
- (9) *Parking.* The desire of the gateway review committee is to visually shield parking areas from public streets and residential areas.
- a. All parking lots and drives shall be hard surfaced with concrete or asphalt, unless an acceptable alternative is approved by the commission, and shall have concrete extruded curbs. Special paving or marking is required for accent areas such as: entrance dropoff zones and pedestrian walkways.
  - b. Innovative design concepts to improve parking area appearance are encouraged. All parking areas shall be visually screened from roadways with plantings or earth mounding (berms) 2½- to three-feet high. Where planting material is used exclusively, 60 percent opacity must be achieved in the winter and 80 percent in the summer.
  - c. A landscaped area with a minimum of ten feet shall be provided between parking and internal roadways and entry drives.
  - d. Large parking areas shall be broken into smaller sections, using berms and landscape medians for separation. On wooded sites, preservation of groups of trees is encouraged to frame smaller parking cells and to screen the parked cars.
  - e. Outdoor display areas may require up to 50 percent greater landscape requirements as established by these provisions.
  - f. On-street parking is not permitted.
  - g. Parking lots of contiguous developments should, where possible, interconnect among the differing developments to encourage continuous movement of traffic among developments to reduce traffic flow on public streets and to minimize the need for excessive curb cuts.
- (c) *Design strategies for development within the TA/C district.* The following shall apply to the TA/C zoning districts within the Gateway District Overlay:
- (1) *Grading plan.* Improvements on the site should be developed to minimize changes in existing topography and the loss of existing mature vegetation. All existing trees with trunks over 12 inches in diameter measured four feet above the lowest grade should be shown on the grading plans. Incentives are provided to retain healthy existing trees. Smooth topographic transition should be provided at the edges of property. Minimum changes in topography are recommended with no slopes exceeding 1:3 ratio (one-foot rise to a three-foot run). All grading plans require approval by the engineering department. All grading

plans over one-acre require approval by the state department of environment and conservation before a grading permit can be issued. See the erosion control provisions of this Code for additional requirements.

- (2) *Site plan.* A building setback of a minimum of 50 feet from the right-of-way shall be maintained for all buildings locating adjacent to any interstate, expressway or principal arterial street. Where the need exists for retaining an open image, protecting views, creating a high quality image, and maintaining natural edges along the roadway's borders a wider setback may be requested. Developments are encouraged to be located and configured in a visually harmonious manner with surrounding developments, existing terrain, and not to impede scenic views within the corridor. Additional district setback information is in this chapter. For details regarding the required information for development plan submittals, see the zoning development plan, parking and landscaping provisions of this chapter.
- (3) *Drainage plan.* To minimize runoff and provide adequate green space, impervious surfaces such as roofs and pavement should not cover more than 75 percent of the site area. Undeveloped right-of-way immediately adjoining the site may be used in calculation of the impervious area, provided it is not more than 15 percent of the calculation and is maintained by the occupant. Stormwater entry and exit points must be protected to avoid erosion. An open space system of ridges, steep slopes, drainage corridors, periphery yards, buffers and landscaped areas provide natural stormwater absorption and filtration zones avoiding the need for large scale piping and retention systems. When such designs are not possible, stormwater areas will be landscaped to blend with natural features of the site. Retention or detention ponds, if needed, are encouraged to be graded gradually enough not to require fencing. Appropriate stormwater and drainage calculations shall be provided by a licensed professional, as permitted by the state, and approved by the city engineer.
- (4) *Landscape plan.* Visual buffers shall be provided along interstates, expressways or major arterial streets by using a combination of opaque fencing, natural vegetation, berming, and/or informal plantings as recommended by the landscape specialist. The property owners shall maintain all plant material within the right-of-way, when used as a credit for pervious area, and on the property for the lifetime of the proposed use. For any new use, this maintenance responsibility must continue. Visual buffers used to soften the appearance of structures and parking lots from interior streets are recommended. Options for landscaping are made available for developers who create dedicated open public spaces, walkways, or other creative, resourceful, land uses in the landscape and buffer provisions of this division. For additional requirements of landscape plans, see the article VII of this chapter, landscaping.
- (5) *Architectural design.* A compatible relationship for proposed developments in the Gateway District Overlay is of critical public concern for any building or site improvements. The intent

of the design review is not to stifle innovative architecture but to ensure respect while reducing incompatible and adverse impacts on the visual experience from the roadways. The commission may alter corporate colors or architectural designs within the district to create a compatible visual image. To accomplish this, the gateway review commission shall exercise the following guidelines for review of such proposed developments:

- a. *Materials.* Selection and use of building materials should respect the climate and heritage of the area.
  1. Exterior building materials, which are encouraged include: brick, stone and stone veneers, plate glass, precast concrete panels, architectural block, glass block, and EIFS (commonly known as Dryvit).
  2. Materials considered unacceptable include: plywood or plywood-based products, pre-engineered metal, painted or natural concrete block, and composite building panels, and vinyl siding.

Designers are encouraged to vary materials from building to building while limiting the number of different materials to three on any individual structure.
- b. *Colors.* In general, neutral or muted tones should be used. A maximum of three predominant colors should be used. Painted or factory-finished metal should be used only in dark colors with a matte finish.
- c. *Accessory buildings.* Metal buildings shall be an accessory to the principal structure without public access, typically used for storage and must be concealed from view. Large areas of exposed concrete are discouraged.
- d. *Architectural elements.* All development designs are to be consistent or compatible within a development in terms of architectural design, exterior building materials, colors and/or arrangement of buildings.
  1. Rooflines shall be strongly defined. Canopies and other architectural elements, such as brick or rockwork details, which define the roof, are encouraged. All mechanical/electrical equipment and rooftop- or ground-mounted equipment and protrusions are to be screened from view from entrances and pedestrian pathways as viewed from on-site ground level. Roof-mounted equipment must be screened on all sides. Sloped roofs may be used in combination with flat roofs to enliven the building profile and to provide screening.
  2. Large blank walls shall be avoided. Recessed or articulated wall surfaces, columns and beams are encouraged to visually segment exterior wall surfaces. Windows and other openings should reflect the character and style of the building.



3. Service areas, including storage, special equipment, maintenance and loading area, shall be completely screened so as not to be visible from the interstate, expressway or arterial highway.
  4. Refuse collection areas shall be visually screened using materials and colors compatible with those of the primary structure and shall be roofed if the contents are visible from any public street, interstate, expressway or arterial street.
- (6) *Signs.* Although signs occupy little space, they have a major impact on the image of the Gateway District Overlay. For this reason, signage systems must be designed to create a consistent quality image throughout the district. Specific requirements can be found in article IV of this chapter, signs, additional requirements are set forth in this document that also apply within the Gateway District Overlay. The intent is to create a cohesive image and to consistently decrease the amount of clutter and visual disturbance within the district. Any appeals to the following standards must be presented to the gateway review commission:
- a. Permanent signs will be reduced by 50 percent of the square footage allowed in the underlying zoning district by the gateway review commission, and are limited to one freestanding sign and one wall mounted sign.
  - b. All other signage regulations pertaining to number of signs, types of signs and height of signs shall follow the underlying zoning regulations.
- (7) *Landscaping and screening.* The landscape guidelines are designed to maintain overall visual continuity within the Gateway District Overlay. The intent is to reflect the traditional character of the area with informal groupings of plants amidst green lawns and woodlands. Landscape design should complement this image.
- a. A performance bond is required for a period of one-year, with extensions granted when necessary, for landscaping not installed at the time of issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Landscaping must be maintained for the lifetime of the intended use. Landscaped areas are required around the base of signs. The minimum landscaped area shall not be less than the square footage of the sign. The landscaped area must be protected from vehicular traffic and approved by the city landscape specialist.
  - b. Healthy existing trees should be retained whenever possible and may be counted as credit (two trees for every saved tree) for other required landscaping. Grading and construction shall avoid the disturbance of such trees. Larger trees or up to double the amount of required number of trees and vegetation may be required by the commission if it is shown the site was clear cut within three years prior to submittal of a development plan.
  - c. Landscape incentives may be utilized to encourage the preservation of existing healthy vegetation and innovative site design. Existing healthy vegetation and the area of land used to maintain the vegetation may be counted towards meeting

performance criteria for buffers, streetscapes, open space, and interior parking areas.

1. A five to 20 percent reduction in the number of parking spaces required on the site may be allowed to the extent that the reduction in the amount of pavement will preserve existing healthy trees in an undisturbed natural condition.
  2. A ten percent reduction in the amount of pervious area is required on the site if public art/space in a compatible manner is included in the development.
  3. A reduction in required landscaping may be considered if the development includes innovative site/building design concepts, substantial redevelopment of a site, or if natural constraints exist.
  4. The area used for preservation of existing healthy vegetation in the interior parking area may be used as credits for other landscaping.
  5. Substitutions for both trees and shrubbery amounts and locations may be considered by the commission with a recommendation from the landscape specialist.
- d. Fencing and screening. Long fences (50 feet or more) should be broken up by landscaping. When necessary to secure outdoor equipment and storage, chain link fencing may be permitted on a case by case basis as long as it is black vinyl coated and screened with landscaping on all portions visible from the right-of-way. Unfinished wood fences are not allowed.
1. Fencing and screening shall not be placed within 25 feet of any street corner. Fencing and screening shall not block access to aboveground, pad-mounted transformers and should provide 15 feet of clear access to the transformer doors.
  2. Fencing and screening shall not impede or divert the flow of water in any drainageway.
  3. The maximum height of fences should generally be six feet, except for tennis courts, storage screening, and similar uses which may be up to 12 feet in height. No fences over two feet six inches shall be placed in any front yard.
  4. The Gateway District Overlay approved standard for right-of-way border fencing or frontal fencing is required along interstate, expressways or arterial highways.
- (8) *Lighting and utilities.* Lighting should be used as a landscape element and for security purposes and should be designed to reduce impacts on adjacent sites. Consistency in style and design of fixtures shall be maintained throughout a site.



- a. Lighting levels should be as even as possible. For all private roadways, parking lots and entrances, the lighting system should provide a minimum ratio of 4:1 uniformity or better, or with the current Institute of Electrical Standards (IES) recommendations for office and mixed-use developments. General parking lot lighting shall not exceed an average of 2½ footcandles overall. All lighted canopies shall have recessed, indirect lights within the canopy.
  - b. Lights placement must avoid glare on-site or light spillage onto adjacent sites. Where necessary, cutoff boxes should be specified to reduce throw on adjacent sites.
  - c. Neon lighting is not encouraged; however, soft and/or muted colors may be allowed.
  - d. Light poles are to be neutral, preferably dark in color and not made of wood. All parking and security lights are to be cutoff luminaries. The height of light fixtures should be in proportion to the building mass, preferably no taller than the building height. Lighting for pedestrian areas should be 12 to 15 feet in height. Ground-oriented pedestrian scale lighting should be considered as an alternative to pole-mounted fixtures along pedestrian walkways at three to four feet in height.
  - e. Outside speakers shall not be permitted for use as paging or public address systems. Outside speakers may only be used under certain conditions, with the commission's approval, for special/cultural or public events.
  - f. All utility lines, including but not limited to electric, telephone and TV cable shall be placed underground.
- (9) *Parking.* The desire of the gateway review committee is to visually shield parking areas from public streets and residential areas.
- a. All parking lots and drives shall be hard surfaced with concrete or asphalt, unless an acceptable alternative is approved by the commission, and shall have concrete extruded curbs. Special paving or marking is required for accent areas such as: entrance dropoff zones and pedestrian walkways.
  - b. Innovative design concepts to improve parking area appearance are encouraged. All parking areas shall be visually screened from roadways with plantings or earth mounding (berms) 2½- to three-feet high. Where planting material is used exclusively, 60 percent opacity must be achieved in the winter and 80 percent in the summer.
  - c. A landscaped area with a minimum of ten feet shall be provided between parking and internal roadways and entry drives.
  - d. Large parking areas shall be broken into smaller sections, using berms and landscape medians for separation. On wooded sites, preservation of groups of trees is encouraged to frame smaller parking cells and to screen the parked cars.

- e. Outdoor display areas may require up to 50 percent greater landscape requirements as established by these provisions.
- f. On-street parking is not permitted.
- g. Parking lots of contiguous developments should, where possible, interconnect among the differing developments to encourage continuous movement of traffic among developments to reduce traffic flow on public streets and to minimize the need for excessive curb cuts.

**(e)(d)** *Design strategies for development within M-1, M-1R and M-2 districts.* The following shall apply to all M-1, M-1R and M-2 zoning districts within the Gateway District Overlay:

- (1) *Grading plan.* Improvements on the site should be developed to minimize changes in existing topography and the loss of existing mature vegetation. Smooth topographic transition should be provided at the edges of property. Sites should be located to minimize destruction of existing vegetation. All existing trees with trunks over 12 inches in diameter measured at four foot above the lowest grade should be shown on the grading plans. Incentives are provided to retain healthy existing trees. Minimum changes in topography are recommended healthy existing trees. Minimum changes in topography are recommended with no slopes exceeding 1:3 ratio (one-foot rise to a three-foot run). All grading plans require approval by the engineering department. Plans for sites over one-acre require approval by the state department of environment and conservation before a grading permit can be issued. See the erosion control provisions of this Code for additional requirements.
- (2) *Site plan.* The purpose of the gateway regulations in industrial areas is to minimize impacts on adjacent properties by providing adequate green space, buffering, and screening around the area proposed for development. A combination of opaque fencing, topography, berming or informal plantings, as recommended by the landscape specialist, is encouraged to be used. The site plans must meet all city requirements for grading, erosion control, and stormwater management.
- (3) *Architectural design and materials.* Permanence in quality should be evident in both the building design and construction materials. Permanence implies that buildings should age without deteriorating, given a minimum level of maintenance. This can be achieved through the use of quality building materials and methods of construction.
  - a. The building facade shall be finished with brick, precast or cast in place concrete textured panels, glass, prefinished architectural panels (without exposed fasteners), stone or other materials acceptable to the committee.
  - b. No building shall be constructed of exposed concrete block unless it is split face, fluted, or such blocks are covered with stucco, Dryvit or equivalent.
  - c. The use of metal buildings is acceptable provided the facade shall be finished with acceptable materials listed in subsection (b)(5)a of this section.

- d. Dumpsters shall be screened or fenced. Loading docks will be permitted on the main elevation of a building that faces the street. Landscaping and screening should be provided to soften the visual impact.
  - e. All HVAC or other equipment located on the roof of any building, or other equipment affixed to, or located on the ground, shall be landscaped or screened from public view.
- (4) *Landscape plan.* Plans and specifications for any building or structure to be constructed on any lot shall include a detailed landscape plan indicating the location, size, type and height of each planting. The area between the lot property line and the street curbline shall be grassed except for areas covered by pavement, sidewalks, and landscaping. All landscaping required on any lot shall be completed within 60 days of substantial completion of construction, or within schedules set forth in the approved plans.
  - (5) *Parking areas.* Off-street parking will be determined by the underlying zoning district with review by the commission as part of the overall site plan review process. Parking shall be provided on the lot to accommodate all parking needs of employees, visitors, and company vehicles. All parking areas will be paved, curbed and appropriately marked.
  - (6) *Signage.* Signage shall be determined by the underlying zoning district subject to commission review as part of the overall site plan review process.
  - (7) *Lighting and utilities.* Plans and specifications for any building or structure to be constructed on any lot shall include a detailed lighting plan indicating the location, type and footcandle strength of the lights. Lighting may be used as a landscape element and for security purposes. Light placement must avoid glare on site or light spillage onto adjacent sites or roadways. Where necessary, cutoff boxes should be specified to reduce throw onto adjacent sites. All utilities from the service lines to the improvements on each lot shall be underground.
- (d)(e) *Design strategies for development within the MX district.* The following shall apply within MX districts:
- (1) *Site plan.* The planning commission and the gateway review commission shall approve a master site plan for the entire district. The district allows flexibility in the development of compatible mixed uses with areas of light manufacturing, professional office, and commercial uses, and to do so by developing a self-contained campus-like atmosphere that protects adjacent uses.
  - (2) *Grading plan.* A master-grading plan shall be submitted which incorporates design features described in this article. The plan shall be designed to meet the erosion control provisions of the subdivision regulations (on file in the clerk's office) and this chapter and shall have the approval of the state department of environment and conservation, and the city engineering department prior to being submitted to the gateway review commission.
  - (3) *Landscape plan.* The master plan shall address the MX district as viewed from the surrounding road network and adjacent land uses. It is important that an image be

presented that complements the sites natural setting. In order to achieve a natural edge, landscape treatments should be designed within the setback buffers and the periphery yard and aimed at providing an entry statement into the park. Earth contours and landscape plantings are to be organized to shield large buildings, parking areas, and lay down yards, which may be visible from adjacent areas.

- (4) *Architectural design.* Within the MX district, architectural design is not specified; however, the materials, colors, architectural elements, and treatment of accessory buildings shall be provided on the master plan. It is encouraged that previous sections of this article be used in designing these elements.
- (5) *Signs.* The number and size of signs shall be as permitted with the underlying zoning ordinance. Signs within the district shall be monument style and landscaped.
- (6) *Landscaping and screening.* Where land uses change within the district, a densely planted strip of 15 to 25 feet in width, depending on the use, shall be created to screen areas from each other. Interstates, expressways, or arterial highways shall be screened with landscaping or architectural elements so that service areas including special equipment, maintenance, and loading areas are obscured from view. Where landscaping is used exclusively for this purpose it must achieve 60 percent opacity in the winter and 80 percent opacity in the summer.
- (7) *Lighting and utilities.* Lighting should be used as a landscape element and for security purposes and should be designed to reduce impacts on adjacent sites. Consistency in style and design of fixtures shall be maintained throughout the site. All utility lines shall be underground.
- (8) *Parking.* Parking areas shall be designed and landscaped as required by the MX district parking provisions. The use of berms and landscaping is encouraged to shield parking areas from public streets and residential areas.

(Code 1998, § 114-506; Ord. No. 5464, § I, 11-7-2006)

### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends sending a FAVORABLE recommendation on to the Kingsport Regional Planning Commission to amend Section 114-421 as it pertains to signage and fencing.